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# The Kirkpatrick Factor

By Jane Rosen

**S**HE IS A PHENOMENON IN American politics: a woman who has never run for office, who failed to get the Government posts she really wanted, and who is now being seriously talked about as a possible contender for the Vice Presidential — maybe even Presidential — nomination in 1988.

A month after stepping down as the United States' chief delegate to the United Nations, Jeane Jordan Kirkpatrick has, if anything, increased her national stature. She may not have won appointment as Secretary of State or national security adviser, but she is being wooed as a speaker at Republican events around the country, she is an all-but-constant presence on television talk shows and President Reagan respects her political power. Twelve days ago, after a whirlwind trip to Honduras and El Salvador, she testified before Congress as part of the Administration's effort to win Congressional support for financing of the Nicaraguan contras.

She was also a member of the Administration's top-level foreign-policy-making unit, the National Security Planning Group. Every week or so, the group gathered in the Situation Room in the White House basement — the President, the Vice President, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the national security adviser, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the White House

chief of staff, the White House Counsel and Jeane Kirkpatrick.

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Many Republican leaders are impressed. "She's going to be a major political factor in 1988," says New York's Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato. Adds Senator Robert W. Kasten of Wisconsin: "We've got only two leaders in the country today, the President on domestic matters and Jeane on international affairs."

Nor is her appeal limited to Republicans. According to some of her associates, a private poll in the New York-New Jersey area shows that Dr. Kirkpatrick has one of the highest positive identifications of anyone tested. Her support in the poll is said to transcend party and sex. "She is a viable contender," concedes David Garth, a leading consultant to Democratic candidates. Mr. Garth believes she could make substantial inroads into the Democratic vote in a Presidential campaign.

Dr. Kirkpatrick has a double appeal: as a strong battler for American ideals at the United Nations — and as a woman. In a sense it was Walter F. Mondale, a politician Dr. Kirkpatrick scorns, who opened the door for her when he picked Geraldine A. Ferraro as his running mate. "From now on," says Howard H. Baker Jr., the former Senate majority leader and himself a Presidential hopeful, "when you look at the lists of good people for President or

Vice President in both parties, you'll find qualified women on them."

Of course, there are major obstacles. She has no public platform from which to run for office and no experience as a campaigner. Her tough, conservative foreign-policy stance has antagonized many, even some members of the moderate wing of the Republican Party.

But last month, Dr. Kirkpatrick removed one formal obstacle when, with considerable fanfare, she changed her party affiliation from Democratic to Republican. And, as the first American woman independently to achieve real power in the arena of international affairs, she has shown a marked ability to hold her own in the political wars. The story of her four years at the United Nations and as a key Presidential adviser sheds light, not only on her strengths and weaknesses, but on the contest within the Republican Party over how conservative conservatives should be. The outcome of that contest could determine her chances for national office.

DURING A RECENT SERIES OF INTERVIEWS Jeane Kirkpatrick mused about her role in Government, offering some of her ideas.

"I was the only woman in our history, I think, who ever sat in regularly at top-level foreign-policy-making meetings. Those arenas have always been closed to women, not only here but in most other countries. And it matters a great deal. It's terribly important, maybe even to the future of the world, for women to take part in making the decisions that shape our destiny."

**D**R. KIRKPATRICK IS unabashedly pro-American and has no patience with "guilt-ridden liberals who are obsessed with self-criticism." She chooses her words carefully: "I believe deeply that the United States is a legitimate and extraordinarily successful society, not perfect but not a sick society. I believe in building American strength and, in measured ways, of using American power — not force, power — in pursuit of our interests.

"I'm convinced that Marxist-Leninist movements are profoundly hostile to human well-being. I don't think there is a more misleading concept than this concept of superpower rivalry which suggests a kind of symmetry between the United States and Russia. There is no symmetry. We don't wish to extend our hegemony. They do."

She questions what she calls the "traditional es-

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